

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Previously Presented) A system configured to support a female urethra, comprising:

an introducer needle having a first end and a second end, each said end having a flattened portion with an opening therethrough;

a handle having a latch mechanism which engages the opening in the flattened portion of the first end of the introducer needle;

an implant member having an end; and

a connector joining the end of the implant member to the flattened portion of the second end of the introducer needle, wherein said connector comprises:

a central portion;

a first arm pivotally mounted to the central portion and having a first opening at a first end; and

a second arm pivotally mounted to the central portion and having a first projection therefrom, the first projection being positioned so that when the first arm and the second arm move together, the first projection is received in the first opening.

2. (Previously Presented) A system according to claim 1, wherein at least a portion of the introducer needle is curved and symmetrical.

3. (Previously Presented) A system according to claim 1, wherein the flattened portion of the first end differs in at least one of size and shape from the flattened portion of the second end.

4. (Original) The system according to claim 1, wherein the introducer needle has a flared section having a cross-sectional profile that, in a given direction, is at least as large as a cross-sectional profile of the connector in the given direction.

5-119. (Canceled).

120. (Previously Presented) A system according to claim 1, wherein said introducer needle has a rounded tip.

121. (Previously Presented) A system according to claim 1, wherein said introducer needle has an asymmetric shape.

122. (Previously Presented) A system according to claim 1, wherein each of said flattened portions has a tip, and the tip of the first flattened portion has a first configuration and the tip of the second flattened portion has a second configuration that is different from the first configuration.

123. (Previously Presented) A system according to claim 1, wherein said introducer needle has an arcuate shape.

124. (Previously Presented) A system according to claim 1, wherein at least a portion of said introducer needle has an oval cross section.

125. (Previously Presented) A system according to claim 1, wherein at least a portion of said introducer needle has a circular cross-section.

126. (Previously Presented) A system according to claim 1, wherein said implant member comprises:

a central portion having a first end and a second end;
a first arm joined to the first end; and
a second arm joined to the second end.

127. (Previously Presented) A system according to claim 126, wherein the first and second arms have a plurality of openings running therethrough.

128. (Previously Presented) A system according to claim 127, wherein the opening are arranged in a two-dimensional pattern.

129. (Previously Presented) A system according to claim 1, wherein the implant member comprises an elongated body made of a flexible material having a first end, a second end, and a support portion, the support portion having an axis running along the length of the implant member, the support portion having a plurality of slits arranged along at least a portion of the axis.

130. (Previously Presented) A system according to claim 129, wherein the slits are selected from the group consisting of V-shaped, semicircular, rectangular, oval, and arrowhead shaped.

131. (Previously Presented) A system according to claim 126, wherein each of the first and second ends has an opening therein.

132. (New) An introducer needle system configured to surgically introduce a urethral implant in a patient, comprising:

an integrally formed introducer needle including an elongated shaft connecting first and second flat spatulated sections, at least one of said spatulated sections having a tip, a constant width portion extending from the tip, and an opening formed in the constant width portion, the shaft including a straight portion connected to a curved portion, the first flat spatulated section connected to the curved portion by a flared section having a cross-sectional profile that covers a cross-sectional profile of the first flat spatulated section; and

a handle including a housing having an elongated portion with a distal end opening dimensioned to receive and hold one of said flat spatulated sections, and an elastically-based latch portion having a projection dimensioned and disposed in the housing to engage the flat spatulated section inserted into the distal end opening of the housing to secure the handle to the introducer needle.